

Russell, Richard B.
CIA 2.01. (proposed)

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CIA's 'Bad' Image

Sen. Richard B. Russell, chairman of the Senate's Central Intelligence Agency watchdog panel, is concerned that recent revelations of CIA activities, such as supporting causes through fronts, have hurt the organization. Sen. Russell is angry over revelations and confessions "by people who have supposedly been sworn to secrecy."

To correct the image, Sen. Russell thinks the CIA should be reorganized. But the senator says he would not separate the CIA's information-gathering functions from its espionage, counter-espionage and political warfare duties. The senator seems more inclined to want to change the CIA's name than to answer basic questions about it.

There is no doubt that America needs a good spy agency and that the CIA has made remarkable but little heralded achievements. But how powerful might it become?

There are dangers in letting a group both gather intelligence and wage undercover actions. To what extent will its actions influence the reports it writes, slanting information to back up its own covert goals?

How well is the CIA controlled by the government? The Bay of Pigs, sponsored by the CIA, was a disaster attributed to weakness in command and concept.

Should the State department keep a closer watch on the CIA?

To what extent should CIA use cover groups such as foundations, labor unions, publishers and student groups?

Questions such as these, are not merely concern over a tarnished image, but are the things Sen. Russell and colleagues ought to be considering.